

GOLD & BLUE LAW EDITION

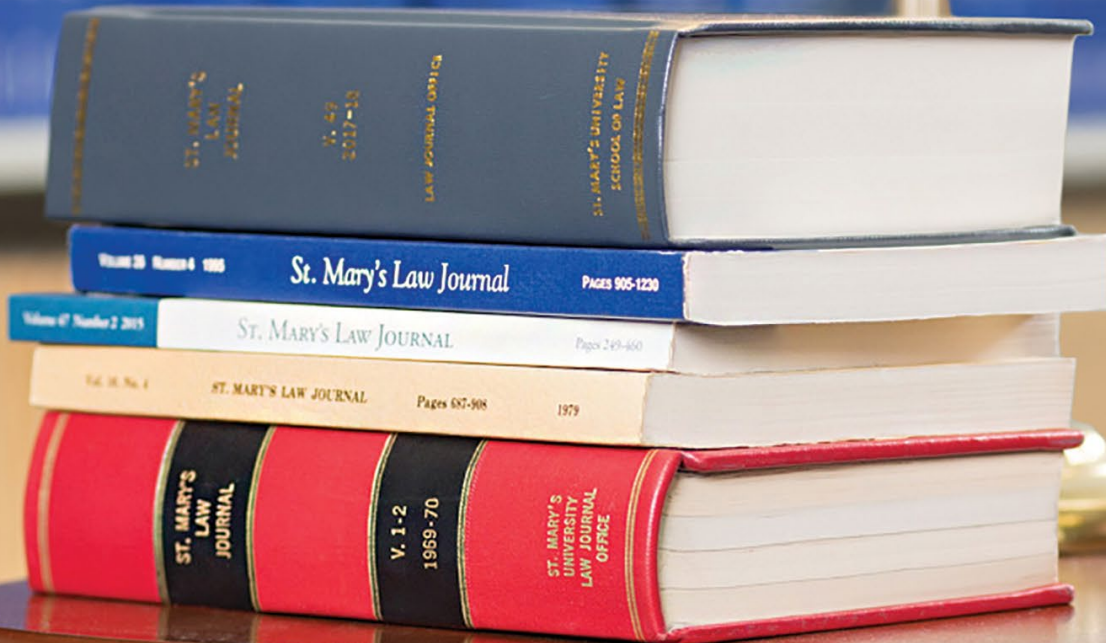
SCHOOL *of* LAW

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2019

Scholarly Tradition

The *St. Mary's Law Journal*
celebrates 50th year



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On the cover: For 50 years, the *St. Mary's Law Journal* has influenced court decisions around the world. The *Law Journal* has been cited in more than 1,100 Texas cases and by several state supreme courts, as well as every federal circuit. Photo by Sarah Brooke Lyons.



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1. Claude Ducloux (J.D. '76), left, received the Austin Bar Foundation's Distinguished Lawyer Award. Pictured with Elizabeth C. Rogers (J.D. '88).
2. Professor of Law Ramona Lampley, J.D., presents research at the Association of American Law Schools.
3. Research Professor of Law Roberto Rosas, S.J.D., shows off gold and blue attire.
4. Law students embrace their school pride by wearing gold and blue on Spirit Thursday.

Respected and protected

LL.M. graduate fulfills his calling to help immigrants

by Melanie Skaggs (M.A. '02)

His father worried when Andrei Aranda (LL.M. '17) told him he was leaving home to further his legal education in the United States. Aranda, who grew up in Chihuahua, Mexico, was already trained as an attorney there but felt a calling to help Mexican and Latin American immigrants navigate the complex U.S. immigration system.

Despite his dad's concern, Aranda moved to Texas with a bold belief, "With hard work, you can accomplish anything."

"It was tough to come from another country as an adult with a different language and culture and go to law school to pursue a master's degree," Aranda said.

He first heard about the St. Mary's School of Law from a friend (and St. Mary's alum) while working for the Consulate General of Mexico in Dallas. "After researching several universities, St. Mary's stood out because of its commitment to ethics and values, as well as being a Catholic institution," Aranda said.

During his time at St. Mary's, Aranda said, he enjoyed the robust nature of the LL.M. program. He felt like the classes were difficult, and the professors were tough, yet they were always willing to help students understand the material.

"I know I made the right choice," he said.

Although he excelled in his classes, Aranda knew it would be an imposing task, as a foreign-trained lawyer, to pass the Texas Bar Examination. "For me, the secret was to stay focused," he said.

In 2017, he earned his LL.M. in American Legal Studies and passed the bar exam on his first try. He became a U.S.-licensed attorney and joined the Elizabeth Reed Law Firm in San Antonio, practicing employment-based immigration law.

“
We are all humans and need to be
respected and protected by the state
and by society.
”

"These are difficult times for immigrants. The law is created to be followed in an attempt to live in a civilized society, but we are all humans and need to be respected and protected by the state and by society," Aranda said. "I always wanted to work with immigrants like me and help them live better lives." ■

Aranda stands in the lobby of San Antonio's Tower Life Building, where he practices employment-based immigration law.

St. Mary's Law ranked one of best for Hispanics

The St. Mary's University School of Law was ranked as one of the best schools for Hispanics in the Winter 2018 edition of *PreLaw Magazine*.

The rankings considered schools' minority student population, minority faculty and services available to minorities. Student population accounted for 50 percent of a school's total score, and faculty and services available counted for 25 percent each.

Examples of student services included bar prep programs, student support groups, mentoring programs, employment workshops and minority affairs offices.

PreLaw Magazine relied on statistics from the American Bar Association and the schools for the report. Overall, St. Mary's was ranked 15th in the nation.

"St. Mary's has an historic leadership role in helping the talented overcome hardship to become leaders in their own right in Texas and the world," said Dean Stephen M. Sheppard, J.S.D.

St. Mary's Law to celebrate *Law Journal's* 50th anniversary

The St. Mary's University School of Law will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the *St. Mary's Law Journal* during the annual Law Weekend and Reunion on Friday, March 29, and Saturday, March 30.

The *Law Journal* has been cited more than a thousand times from the bench, and it has been relied on by generations of lawyers, said Dean Stephen M. Sheppard, J.S.D.

"From its first issue, the *St. Mary's Law Journal* has represented the mission of this law school with diligence, scholarship and professional values," Sheppard said. "It has also made itself valuable to the profession in a way that few scholarly enterprises in law have done."

The event will feature keynote speaker Don McGahn, who served as White House counsel in 2017 and 2018.

"You will not want to miss this celebration of the law, our friends and St. Mary's," Sheppard said.

Visit law.stmarytx.edu/law-weekend for a schedule.

See related story, Page L6.

Master of Laws degree program to add concentrations

The St. Mary's University School of Law's Master of Laws (LL.M.) Program will be shifting to a single degree with the option to add concentrations, thanks to a change approved in December by the American Bar Association's Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar.

The law school currently offers three separate degrees for the LL.M.: American Legal Studies, International and Comparative Law, and International Criminal Law.

Historically, the LL.M. program was aimed almost exclusively at foreign lawyers. The new degree will have more to offer for domestic students as well, said Dean Stephen M. Sheppard, J.S.D.

The existing degree programs will become three concentrations for the new LL.M. program, with room for more, including Cybersecurity Law and National Security Law.

"The result will be an LL.M. program with five fields, or potentially more," Sheppard said. "This allows us to offer some of the tremendous resources we have available through our faculty and among our graduates in cybersecurity and other related fields."



St. Mary's Law partners with Chinese university

Students of the St. Mary's University School of Law and Southwest University of Political Science & Law (SWUPL) in Chongqing, China, will soon have more academic opportunities available to them, thanks to a memorandum of understanding signed in December.

Through this agreement, the two universities will be able to engage in dual-degree programs, faculty exchanges and semester-long student exchanges. Dean Stephen M. Sheppard, J.S.D., pictured left, described it as "an important source for our students who choose to understand Chinese law better."

As the biggest law school in China, SWUPL has attached a lot of importance to opening their students' views, said SWUPL's Dean Guangjun Zhang, pictured right.

"We see international outreach as a very important thing for our university," Zhang said. "We want to develop new approaches to the cultivation of our legal talent."

Informed decisions

Law student launches workshop for adults with disabilities and their families

by Frank Garza

For most people, adulthood is a seamless transition. When someone turns 18 in Texas, in the eyes of the law they can sign a contract, make their own medical decisions, get married and vote, among many other things.

For individuals with disabilities, it is not that simple. Leslie Alvarez, a second-year J.D. student at St. Mary's University, is preparing to help her younger brother, who has disabilities, with legal choices once he becomes an adult. That prompted Alvarez to start a new workshop to help people who have disabilities and their families understand their legal options.

When a person with disabilities turns 18, parents are no longer able to access their medical or school records. Schools may advise parents to get a guardianship, which gives all of the child's rights to the parent. But that has downsides as well.

"They can't vote. They can't get married," Alvarez said. "Some people do need a guardianship, but others don't and are capable of making their own decisions."

Until recently, guardianship was the only option. But in 2015, Texas became the first state to recognize supported decision-making agreements, or SDMAs, which allow a person with disabilities to appoint a supporter — a parent, usually — who can take part in the person's life, legally.

"That means they can be with them in the doctor's office, be in the room for school meetings. But at the end of the day, it is the person with disabilities making the decision," Alvarez said. "I want to make sure people with disabilities are able to finish school, have a life and be independent."

With the goal of informing more families about SDMAs, Alvarez started the law school's Supported Decision-Making Agreement Workshop.

"Due to her initiative, we were able to start up the workshop in a matter of weeks, serving eight families," said Gregory Zlotnick, J.D., Pro Bono Program Supervisor, of the initial program in Fall 2018. "I look forward to this workshop being replicated and for other students to be inspired by Leslie's example." ■





Compassionate player

Former college footballer leads discussions on sports law, legal civility

by Frank Garza

Professor of Law David Grenardo, J.D., invites students to pray before class. At the end of the prayer, he asks them to treat each other with dignity and respect.

“As lawyers, we have to argue passionately, but we don’t need to be rude and obnoxious. It’s just like in sports, if you think about the NBA today. LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers, Dwyane Wade of the Miami Heat, Chris Paul of the Houston Rockets and Carmelo Anthony are all good buddies. But they really try to destroy each other on the court,” Grenardo said.

The analogy is fitting, given that last spring Grenardo started a Sports Law course, which touches on different aspects of the law — constitutional, employment, antitrust and contract.

As a former kick returner and defensive back for Rice University, Grenardo offers a unique perspective on sports law. He’s frequently published in law journals and in the press — including the *New York Times* — on whether college athletes should be paid, one of the hot-button topics the class covers.

“ ————— ”
How can we make the students’ lives better? How can we better the University and the law school?
————— ”

Discussions occasionally get so heated that Grenardo said he took his students up on a joking suggestion to implement a penalty box “because they know I write about civility.”

Civility isn’t just a topic Grenardo publishes about or teaches in his Professional Responsibility class. It’s something he tries to impart to his students in everything he does.

It’s why he often takes time to review students’ résumés and cover letters, chaired the committee to search for the Beirne Director of the University’s newly established Center for Catholic Studies and has accumulated numerous hours of pro bono service.

“It’s about trying to help the other person, trying to make the other person’s life easier,” Grenardo said. “How can we make the students’ lives better? How can we better the University and the law school?” ■

RES

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Scholarly tradition

St. Mary's Law Journal *celebrates 50th year*

by Frank Garza

For the past 50 years, the *St. Mary's Law Journal* has been punching well above its weight class, becoming one of the most influential legal journals in the nation.

The legal analysis written or edited by the more than 1,400 J.D. students who have dedicated their time to the *Law Journal* over the past five decades has influenced court decisions around the world. The *Law Journal* ranked in 2017 in the top 4 percent most-cited law review in federal and state courts nationally and the top 3 percent most-cited law review in courts worldwide.

As the current editorial team works on Volume 50, current editor-in-chief Katherine Spiser Rios, a third-year J.D. student, feels the pressure and importance of the *Law Journal's* tradition of excellence.

"We have an opportunity to reach out to the wider legal community and take topics that either have extreme legal importance or are of legal interest, and put our spin on it," Spiser Rios said. "These are things that make you think as a practitioner, judge or a member of the legal community."

It's challenging and exciting, she said, adding that simultaneously handling "the responsibilities of the *Law Journal* is a lot."

"A lot of times, you're running on empty," Spiser Rios said. "In that environment, there are a lot of big personalities, and learning how to adapt your leadership style and how to come together to still produce good work is a major skill."

Martin Beirne (J.D. '69), the *Law Journal's* first editor-in-chief, realized how influential a law review could be while clerking for a law firm in downtown San Antonio.

"I gained a deeper appreciation for law reviews. I had to do a lot of research, and I could see so many of the courts and lawyers relying on journals' scholarship," Beirne said.

That scholarship, Beirne noticed, was not only from other practicing lawyers, but also from students.

He approached then-Dean Ernest A. Raba (B.A. '34, LL.B. '37) about the creation of a law journal, who then appointed an exploratory faculty committee to research the idea. A year later, the faculty committee decided a law journal would be critical for the law school "to grow in stature and reputation." Students formed a board and staff of writers, and Beirne became the editor of Volume 1.

The students received a lot of support from the local community. Banks would take out ads in the *Law Journal*,

- ◀ The *St. Mary's Law Journal* Volume 1 sits next to the most recent publication, Volume 49.

while members of the legal community helped underwrite some of the first projects, Beirne said. Even more notably, the *Law Journal* received articles from Texas Supreme Court justices for publication in its early issues.

“Producing a law journal is a very scholarly enterprise in terms of research, writing and editing. They would have been establishing that enterprise within a faculty” that was largely not publishing

“ **I gained a deeper appreciation for law reviews. I had to do a lot of research, and I could see so many of the courts and lawyers relying on journals’ scholarship.** ”

research then, said Professor of Law Vincent R. Johnson, J.D., LL.D. “It was a fundamental shift in the culture of the law school.”

Texas Supreme Court Justice Paul Green (J.D. ’77), a staff writer on Volume 8, remembers enjoying the writing process.

“Being able to structure your legal writing — learning how to support your argument and weave your argument — that was really important,” Green said.

As a judge, Green finds law reviews useful to determine how a particular legal issue has been handled historically, how it is viewed presently and how judges should look to interpret it in the future.

The *Law Journal* has been cited in numerous state supreme courts, including Alaska, Colorado, Indiana, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, Tennessee and, of course, Texas.

“Some portions of it are so highly regarded that they’re kind of the be-all and end-all,” said Justice Melissa Goodwin (J.D. ’93) of the Third Court of Appeals, who was a senior associate editor on Volume 24. “For example, I do appellate work, and W. Wendell Hall’s *Standards of Review* is like the Bible.”

Standards of Appellate Review in Civil Appeals, first published in Volume 21 (1990), is one of the *Law Journal*’s most cited articles. It has been updated five times since, with another update coming this year.

The *Law Journal* has had a significant impact on the development of law related to attorney conduct and the ethical standards to which lawyers and judges are held, Johnson said.

“Civil procedure is what makes the legal system run. *Standards of Review* and many other articles have improved that area of law and made it understandable,” he said. “We’ve played a very important role in examining what the courts do and how the legal system can be improved.”

Given the *Law Journal*’s influence over the years, third-year J.D. student and current senior associate editor Michael Lichtmacher said it is a tremendous honor to be part of the Volume 50 staff.

“Once an article is out there, it’s out there for the entire world to see, and people will make judgments on the quality of your legal education based on that article,” Lichtmacher said. “We have an obligation to uphold the reputation of the journal and to live up to the expectations that have been set.” ■

The *St. Mary’s Law Journal* Volume 50 editorial board, from left top row to right: Katelynn Duane Armijo, Mary Kathryn Brown, Gabriel M.A. Elorreaga, Jordan H. Jentz, Jessica Manka, Savannah Files, Alexandra Burks, Cassandra V. Flores, Julie Polansky Bell, Ashley “Nikki” Vega, Katherine “Katina” Zampas and Katherine Spiser Rios.



Photo by Sarah Brooke Lyons



◀ The inaugural editorial board of the *St. Mary’s Law Journal*, from left to right: Anthony Harris, case-note editor; Frank Walker, articles editor; Martin D. Beirne Jr., editor-in-chief; Servando Gonzales, managing editor; and Nicholas Ribis, comment editor. The three men standing are Stanley Eisenberg, business manager; Ronald Sutton, research editor; and Judge James R. Norvell, then-Research Professor of Law and faculty coordinator.

Big league

NFL agent has represented more than 400 players

by Frank Garza

Jordan Woy (J.D. '87) negotiated his first major league contract while attending St. Mary's University School of Law.

The contract was for now-retired Major League Baseball left fielder Pete Incaviglia, making Incaviglia one of a handful of players to ever get a major league contract straight out of college.

"Working with Pete was exciting because I was still in law school, and helping a player get a major league contract was unique since there had only been two beforehand," Woy said. "It drove me to try to change the business in ways that had not been explored before."

After graduating, Woy dove into the sports world. There weren't many full-time sports agents, especially for NFL players, because negotiating NFL players' contracts wasn't in the rules. Unless teams traded them, players were stuck playing for the same team or had to retire.

That changed in 1993, when the NFL introduced free agency.

"I realized that getting veteran clients who were about to become free agents was a big business," said Woy, who now co-owns Willis & Woy Sports Group LLC in Dallas.

Later that year, Woy negotiated the first-ever NFL free agent contract for former offensive lineman Brian Habib. Setting a second record, Habib signed with the Denver Broncos and became the then-highest-paid offensive lineman in the NFL.

Woy's clients have included former Dallas Cowboys players, such as outside linebacker Anthony Spencer, offensive tackle Flozell Adams, wide receiver Terrell Owens and safety Roy Williams.

He's represented players from a number of other teams, including the Green Bay Packers, the Washington Redskins and the New Orleans Saints.

Altogether, he has represented more than 400 NFL players.

Being a sports agent is a cutthroat business "like high-stakes poker," but Woy enjoys it.

"I've become great friends with a lot of my clients, and we've stayed in touch," he said.

Woy said he loved his business law classes at St. Mary's. Law school, as a whole, prepared him for the sports agent world, where he plays the role of salesperson, lawyer and manager.

"St. Mary's was a good experience. It prepared me for the next step in life, and it taught me how to prepare and think analytically," Woy said. ■

“
St. Mary's was a good experience. It prepared me for the next step in life, and it taught me how to prepare and think analytically.
 ”



Photo by Jill Broussard

SOCCER STAR

ROTC CHAMP

CHILDREN'S AUTHOR

SA CHANGE-MAKER

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St. Mary's and Holy Rosary
team up to improve the parish
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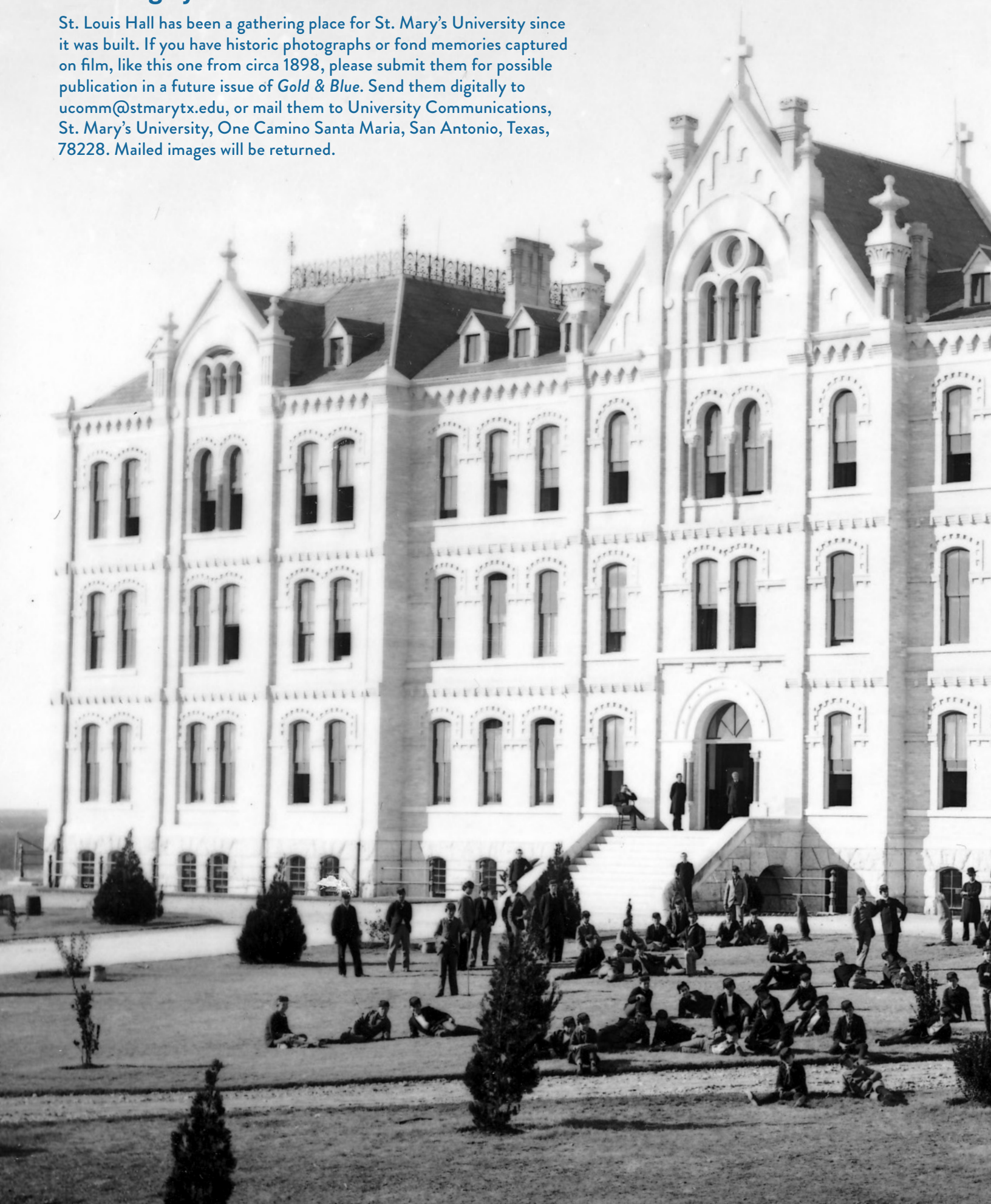
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Standing by St. Louis Hall

St. Louis Hall has been a gathering place for St. Mary's University since it was built. If you have historic photographs or fond memories captured on film, like this one from circa 1898, please submit them for possible publication in a future issue of *Gold & Blue*. Send them digitally to ucomm@stmarytx.edu, or mail them to University Communications, St. Mary's University, One Camino Santa Maria, San Antonio, Texas, 78228. Mailed images will be returned.





GOLD & BLUE

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Gold & Blue is produced for alumni and friends three times a year by the Office of University Communications.

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MISSION

St. Mary's University, as a Catholic Marianist University, fosters the formation of people in faith and educates leaders for the common good through community, integrated liberal arts and professional education, and academic excellence.

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1. Rattler Man and the University Police Department donate Christmas gifts to kids in need.
2. St. Mary's marks Veterans Day.
3. MBA students honored by Texas Business Hall of Fame.
4. The History Department celebrates its semiannual awards.
5. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences wears gold and blue for Spirit Thursday.

On the cover: Iliana Mallett, senior Management major, sits in the pews of Holy Rosary Catholic Church after receiving the University's 2019 Marianist Heritage Student Leadership Award. Mallett, a parish summer camp counselor who later founded a Girl Scouts troop in the neighborhood, represents the many individuals at St. Mary's and Holy Rosary affecting positive change in the parish. Photo by Robin Jerstad.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Leaders in change:

Reflections on our responsibility as a Catholic university to affect change from within

by Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., President, St. Mary's University; and Catherine Stone (J.D. '82), Partner, Langley & Banack, Inc., and Chief Justice (retired), Texas Fourth Court of Appeals. President Mengler and Judge Stone served as the Vice Chair and Chair, respectively, of the Lay Commission on Clergy Sexual Abuse of Minors in the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

On Jan. 31, we submitted to Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller and the public the *Report of the Lay Commission on Clergy Abuse of Minors in the Archdiocese of San Antonio*. As chair and co-chair, we want to share with the St. Mary's University community a few of our reflections.

We were each led to serve on the Lay Commission for the same reasons — to help ease the pain of the many survivors, assist in fostering a safe environment for the protection of children and young people, and respond to the intensifying urgency of the Church's current crisis. We also wanted to serve on the Lay Commission for a more global reason, one that extends beyond the context of clergy sexual abuse: If you want to reform an organization, the best way to do so is from within. This strategy — of working from

responsibility to serve the Catholic Church. In particular, in time of crisis, a Catholic university should step up to the plate and enlist the expertise of members of its community. The Rev. Ted Hesburgh, long-time president of the University of Notre Dame, famously remarked that “a Catholic university is where the Church can do its thinking.” But not just the Church's thinking. A Catholic university should model the many ways in which the Catholic Church serves the Body of Christ, so defined as *everyone* — lay people as well as clergy, non-Catholics as well as Catholics, and especially those who suffer and are in need of our loving care.

We note with pride that for generations, St. Mary's University — through its students, faculty, staff and alumni — has been serving those who are hungry and vulnerable. Each year, for example, St. Mary's students dedicate thousands of volunteer hours of service to the needy of San Antonio. The work of the Lay Commission is just the most recent example of members of the St. Mary's University community leading the way. We express our gratitude to Lay Commission members Meredith Chacon (J.D. '03), retired Judge Elma Salinas Ender (J.D. '78), Tim Palomera, M.D. (B.S. '93), David Reilly (B.A. '66) and Ronit Sherwin, CEO of our local Jewish Federation, for their outstanding dedication to a challenging task. The first four and Judge Stone are St. Mary's graduates.

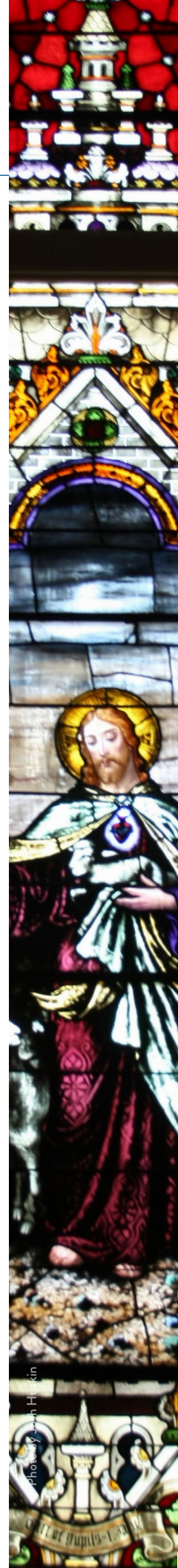
As we look forward, we are inspired by the words of the Blessed William Joseph Chaminade: “We must not be discouraged if we encounter some obstacle in the way of necessary change. Never has change been done, and never will it be done, without difficulty. With patience we will come to the end of all.” ■

“
Never has change been done,
and never will it be done,
without difficulty. *With patience*
we will come to the end of all.

— Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

within an organization to effectuate change — is one that generations of St. Mary's graduates have undertaken as they have served and led their companies, firms and organizations in promoting the common good.

But why us? The answer is tied to our belief that a Catholic university bears a significant





University receives \$1M gift for Peer Ministry

A \$1 million gift from Charles Barrett Jr. (B.B.A. '62) and Melissa Barrett will support the St. Mary's University Peer Ministry program, designed to strengthen and enrich the faith lives of students living on campus.

This gift marks another definitive step toward reaching the \$130 million fundraising goal of The Defining Moment Comprehensive Campaign, which the University publicly launched in November 2017. As the largest campaign in University history, donors have already helped St. Mary's raise \$120 million to invest in future generations of students.

Charles Barrett Jr., president and CEO of Barrett Holdings Inc., is a St. Mary's Trustee Emeritus and was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2016. He leads an asset holding company, which is an authorized dealer for automotive franchises, real estate holdings,

and manager of proprietary equity investments. Barrett is an authorized dealer for Jaguar, Maserati and Alfa Romeo vehicles.

The Barretts have a decades-long legacy of giving to the University, including donating to The Park at St. Mary's and the Barrett Memorial Bell Tower, which was dedicated in 2007 and named in memory of Charles Barrett's mother and eldest son.

"St. Mary's University is a special place for me and my family," Charles Barrett said. "The Catholic and Marianist values I learned there have sustained me throughout my life and career. Melissa and I feel blessed to help carry on that tradition."

The gift will rename the Peer Ministry program after the Barrett family and endow a fund to support it.

The Princeton Review names St. Mary's Law, MBA programs to "Best Schools" lists

The Princeton Review added the St. Mary's University School of Law and the Greehey School of Business MBA programs to two "Best Schools" lists for 2019.

The School of Law ranked among outstanding law schools profiled in the annual feature, "The Best 165 Law Schools."

St. Mary's University was also listed as having one of 252 outstanding on-campus MBA programs selected for the "Best Business Schools" list. The Princeton Review chose the schools for this list based on data from surveys of 18,400 students and of administrators at the schools.

The School of Law also ranked No. 4 in the nation on the "Most Chosen by Older Students" list. The Princeton Review based the ranking on the average age of entry of law school students and student reports of how many years they spent out of college before enrolling in law school. The median age for first-year students in the St. Mary's J.D. day program is 25 and the J.D. evening program is 30.

Spurs' team physician Saenz addresses fall grads

St. Mary's University alumnus Paul S. Saenz, D.O., team physician for the NBA San Antonio Spurs, the San Antonio Missions Baseball Club and St. Mary's University, served as keynote speaker at the 18th annual Fall Commencement in December.

The University awarded 149 bachelor's degrees, 140 master's degrees and four

doctoral degrees. The Commencement included the first 11 students to earn a degree through the Greehey School of Business' MBA for Professionals program.

Saenz earned his Bachelor of Arts in Biology from St. Mary's in 1979 and then his medical degree from the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Worth. He is the founding partner of Sports Medicine Associates of San Antonio and was named a St. Mary's University Distinguished Alumnus in 2010.





St. Mary's Alumni Association honors distinguished faculty

The St. Mary's University Alumni Association recognized five faculty members during its annual Faculty Appreciation Dinner in January. The Distinguished Faculty Award was established in 1984 to recognize outstanding faculty in each school.

- Andrew T. Brei, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Philosophy
- Angeli Willson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Education
- Verónica Contreras-Shannon, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biological Sciences
- K. Matthew Gilley, Ph.D., Greehey Chair in Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility and Professor of Management
- Chenglin "Gary" Liu, J.S.D., Professor of Law

"I appreciate this opportunity to acknowledge and honor our remarkable faculty at St. Mary's," Aaron Tyler, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, said in a campus message. "We are proud of our outstanding professors and their commitment to Marianist education."

Greehey School of Business offers two new minors

The Greehey School of Business recently added two minors to its program lineup: Digital Marketing, and Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

The minors, available to students of all majors, are "geared toward helping students develop an entrepreneurial mindset irrespective of their academic discipline," said Tanuja Singh, D.B.A., Dean of the Greehey School of Business. "The skills they will learn are becoming increasingly important across all organizations and vocations."

Sergio Palacios, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Management, called the Entrepreneurship and Innovation minor "highly experiential."

"Students learn best practices about innovation, from product and services to entire business models' innovation," he said. "We have partnered with large companies — such as Apple and local organizations CivTechSA, Launch SA and The Impact Guild — to provide experiential opportunities to students to tackle real problems in the community."

For the Digital Marketing minor, "students will learn to evaluate and interpret data metrics, create digital strategies and optimize the latest tools for digital content creation for marketing purposes," said Tom Madison, Ph.D., CPA, Associate Dean of the Greehey School of Business.

"Whether students want to start their own business or work for an organization, these minors help them develop skills that are market responsive," Singh said.

Photos by Robin Jerstad

St. Mary's honors Marianist Heritage Award recipients

Several members of the St. Mary's University community were honored with the 2019 Marianist Heritage Award.

1. Iliana Mallet (from left), senior Management student, Marianist Heritage Student Leadership Award recipient; Marianist Heritage Award recipients Diane Duesterhoeft, Librarian and Professor at the Blume Library; and María Smith, Minister for Pastoral Music in University Ministry; Pilar Martinez, third-year J.D. student, Marianist Heritage Student Leadership Award recipient
2. María Smith accepts her honor in January.
3. Following the award ceremony, St. Mary's University President Thomas M. Mengler, J.D., speaks during the Marianist Heritage Mass at Holy Rosary Catholic Church.

English professor joins Texas Institute of Letters

Refugio “Ito” Romo, Ph.D. (B.A. ’83, M.A. ’93), Associate Professor of English Literature and Language, was one of 17 writers inducted into the Texas Institute of Letters, a distinguished honor society that celebrates Texas literature and recognizes distinctive literary achievement.

Joining Romo in this year’s class of inductees are Oscar-nominated screenwriter and director Wes Anderson, and playwright and Broadway actor Eugene Lee, to name a few. Members will be officially inducted April 26 and April 27 in McAllen.

Romo was born and raised in Laredo. His recent work, dubbed “Chicano Gothic” and “Chicano Noir,” shows the dark and gritty life along Interstate 35 through South Texas, where his family has lived for nine generations.

He is the author of *The Border is Burning* and *El Puente/The Bridge*, published by University of New Mexico Press, and in German by Europa Verlag as *Der Duft der Maulbeeren*.

KSAT begins livestreaming Athletics games

St. Mary’s Athletics has partnered with Ed Lozano of LCTV Inc to allow Rattler Athletics home events to be featured before a larger audience on KSAT-TV’s multiple digital platforms.

The Rattlers can now be found on KSAT.com, and on KSAT’s mobile and over-the-top (OTT) apps. Simply search for “KSAT,” San Antonio’s ABC affiliate, on your mobile device or on streaming devices, such as Apple TV, Roku and Amazon Fire TV.

Heartland recognizes 152 athletes on fall Honor Roll

The Heartland Conference recognized more than 150 Rattler student-athletes for making the Fall Honor Roll.

Of the Heartland’s 1,279 student-athletes recognized, St. Mary’s named 152 to the list. The Rattlers placed 90 on the President’s Honor Roll and 62 on the Commissioner’s Honor Roll. Students on the President’s Honor Roll maintained a GPA of 3.5 or

higher during the fall semester, while those on the Commissioner’s Honor Roll maintained a minimum GPA of 3.0.

Baseball posted the largest number of students to the honor roll with 28, followed by Women’s Soccer (23) and Volleyball (20). This is the highest number of student-athletes the University has had recognized on the honor roll since Fall 2015.

“Division II operates with a ‘life in the balance’ approach, emphasizing learning, growth and development through academics, athletics, community engagement and post-graduation success,” said St. Mary’s Athletics Director Rob Coleman. “Academics is a key component of this balance, and I am so proud of our entire program, coaching staff and student-athletes for their commitment to academic excellence.”

Rattler Men’s Basketball guard Dimitri Peterson dunks during a home game against Rogers State in January.



Photo by Antonio Morano

Goal maker

Soccer player Pato Botello Faz inks pro deal

BORN: Monterrey, Mexico

MAJOR: Exercise and Sports Science

POSITION: Forward

YEAR: Senior

Photos by Antonio Morano



by Darren Shiverdecker

In his senior season on the St. Mary's University Men's Soccer team, Pato Botello Faz took the Heartland Conference by storm and signed to play with a United Soccer League club in Michigan, the Lansing Ignite. His six game-winning goals pushed the Rattlers as high as No. 12 in the national rankings and helped secure the team's first home-field playoff at Sigma Beta Chi Field in Fall 2018.

Botello claimed two conference Offensive Player of the Week honors and earned both Offensive Player of the Year as well as Player of the Year. He was voted to the 2018 Division II Commissioners Association Men's Soccer All-America Second Team, becoming only the fourth Rattler to do so and the first in 20 years.

We caught up with the easygoing Exercise and Sports Science senior to reflect on his time at St. Mary's.

Q: WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE ST. MARY'S?

A: The community, the coaches, the facilities and teammates — it all made me want to come here.

Q: WHAT GOT YOU INTO SOCCER?

A: Seeing my brother play when I was little, probably around 4 years old, made me want to jump in there and play too. I actually started playing with his team after that.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PRE-MATCH SUPERSTITIONS OR TRADITIONS?

A: I have to wear the same socks every game. I always put my right sock on before my left sock and my right cleat before my left one. Pray — I have to pray.

Q: HOW DO YOU BALANCE ATHLETICS WITH SCHOOL LIFE?

A: It's easier when I'm in the season, because it's kind of like a routine: school, practice, homework, sleep. It actually gets harder when the season ends. That routine kind of fades.

Q: YOU HAD MANY INTERNATIONAL TEAMMATES THIS YEAR. WHAT WAS IT LIKE PLAYING WITH THEM?

A: Playing with so many international players can be challenging at first because everyone has a different style of play. But once we all got on the same page, it was very good. It is very cool to learn from different cultures as well.

Q: FOR YOU, WHAT IS THE BIGGEST BENEFIT FROM COMING TO ST. MARY'S?

A: It's a great education. It gave me the opportunity to sign with a professional soccer team. That's been my dream since I was a little kid. ■

Biting back

Biology professor's mosquito genome research lands in Nature

by Alex Z. Salinas (B.A. '11)

The world's deadliest creature is not what you might expect.

"The number of human lives taken yearly by all animals combined — including humans — still falls short of the lives taken by mosquitos," said Sourav Roy, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences.

Roy has been researching the pint-sized killers' genome for the past seven years. *Nature*, ranked among the world's top academic journals, recently published his latest work with a consortium of scientists.

Their collective efforts have led to a clearer understanding of ever-mutating genomes found in female *Aedes aegypti* mosquitos, which infect more than 400 million people a year with dangerous viral diseases including dengue, yellow fever, Zika and chikungunya.

Roy said this research may help improve population control methods for this insect.

The World Health Organization reports that mosquitos kill about 750,000 people each year — and nothing else even comes close. In second place are humans, responsible for 475,000 deaths, followed by snakes at 50,000. Paling in comparison are sharks and wolves, each responsible for about 10 deaths a year.

Roy, who is helping the University launch a new bachelor's degree in Bioinformatics, said much of his own research is computational. He focuses primarily on identifying serine proteases — enzymes related to mosquitos' immune response and blood protein digestion. Through a grant from the National Institutes of Health, he will continue his work and has already provided research opportunities for six St. Mary's University undergraduates.

"*Aedes aegypti* are desert mosquitos, so their eggs can survive in drought conditions," he said. "We study the females because they are the only ones that blood feed, during which proteins are provided for egg development. It's during blood feeding that they transmit disease."

Aedes aegypti mosquitos are located in warm climates across the globe, primarily in Africa and Asia with pockets in the southern United States, Roy said.

A native of India, Roy said he's seen firsthand the effects of mosquitos through family and friends who have suffered from dengue and malaria.

"We know a lot already about mosquitos, but there's still a long way to go," he said. ■



Top cadet

ROTC cadet ranked No. 3 in the nation

by Nikki Harris

St. Mary's University senior Cameron "Alex" Martinez has forged a path that allows him to embrace military tradition, ambition, humility and unexpected change.

A member of the St. Mary's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), Martinez will be commissioned in May as a first lieutenant. But he's already hit a major accomplishment in his young military career — earning U.S. Army Cadet Command's designation as the No. 3 ROTC cadet in the nation in 2019.

The U.S. Army Cadet Command annually ranks seniors in ROTC programs based on GPA, physical fitness, ROTC training performance, extracurricular activities and more.

Fewer than 1 percent of Americans serve in the military, said Lt. Col. Julian Perez, Chair and Professor of Military Science at St. Mary's. That puts Martinez in an even more elite group by making the top three out of 5,527 cadets nationwide, he added. Martinez excelled in all categories with a GPA nearing 4.0, an Army Physical Fitness Test perfect score, selection for leadership programs and high performance in athletic competitions. He's also the top-ranking cadet of civilian colleges nationwide; the top two cadets attend Virginia Military Institute and The Citadel in South Carolina.

Growing up in Amarillo in a family deep-seated with military tradition, Martinez knew he wanted to join. His father and uncle both served in the Army. His grandfathers served in the Navy and Air Force.

Martinez and his brother, Zane, also a St. Mary's cadet, were raised by a single father until age 8 and 7, respectively, when their father died from cancer.

"We were very blessed to get adopted by our own uncle and aunt. Had we gone through the foster system, there is no telling where we could be right now," Alex Martinez said.

The couple helped the brothers attend a college prep school at which Martinez learned time management and how to balance academics and extracurriculars — critical to his success in ROTC.

Uncertain if he would receive a college ROTC scholarship, Martinez enlisted in the Army at age 17 and went through basic training before his high school senior year. But three colleges offered him ROTC scholarships, and he picked St. Mary's.

When the Finance and Risk Management major is commissioned in May, he will begin a career as a finance officer, whose roles range from overseeing currency exchanges to purchasing supplies and services necessary to complete a mission.

He thinks his recognition reflects upon the St. Mary's ROTC program as a whole, saying "We are not one of the largest programs in the country ... so for this program to receive this recognition is huge." ■



Power of potential

Alumna has traveled the world, rebuilding and changing communities

by *Anndria Flores (B.A. '12, M.A. '16)*

As director of community impact for SA2020, Kiran Bains is at the heart of San Antonio's commitment to propelling businesses and nonprofits to fulfill the city's vision: deliver quality services to the public and achieve prosperity.

Looking back, it is no wonder Bains (B.A. '06) dedicated her life to giving back, including stints with nongovernmental organizations in Bangladesh and Uganda. Since childhood, service has played a powerful role in her life.

In practicing her Sikh faith, she would volunteer with her mother in hospitals, nursing homes and libraries in San Antonio. These early experiences informed her ideas about community and affecting change. So when it came time to apply to college, her older sister Mona Bains (B.S. '01) suggested she consider St. Mary's University.

However, when the first-generation college student got in, she was unsure how to choose a major. Advising sessions with Mary Lynne Gasaway Hill, Ph.D., Professor of English Literature and Language, helped her narrow down her many interests to her true passions.

"It was an experience of feeling so seen by a professor," Bains said. "She beautifully met me where I was. I took strides thanks to that level of attention from a professor."

"She just pulsed with potential," Hill remembered of Bains, who chose an International Relations major.

That thread of "feeling seen" followed her throughout her time at St. Mary's. Mentors, such as Larry Hufford, Ph.D., Professor of International Relations, taught her life lessons, like recognizing the value of her parents' informal education and busting the cultural stereotypes with which she had grown up.

"I left St. Mary's feeling like I could just change the world," Bains said. "I have this conviction still today."

Upon graduating, Bains received a fellowship from the Indian American Foundation to work for a nongovernmental organization in Bangladesh, helping with women's issues. Bains established a relationship rooted in trust with women in the community — an experience that influenced her admission to the Kroc Institute for International

Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Bains was one of only 30 students from around the globe accepted into the master's program in 2007.

While in graduate school, she participated in a six-month internship for a land rights organization in Kampala, Uganda. She fell in love with the Ugandans' spirit and kindness, which reminded her of home.

After graduate school, Bains returned to Uganda on a yearlong fellowship helping refugees resettle and begin farming after years in camps.

"There was an entire generation of people born in camps who were now starting to return home," she said. "Farmers weren't farming for decades and now their children's children had no idea how to farm."

Along with teams of Ugandans, Bains helped create systems for elders and other community members to share knowledge from their oral traditions about farming and reclaiming land.

When her fellowship ended, Bains worked with a nonprofit in Brooklyn, New York, investing in research across Africa. She also worked as a teacher in New York City public schools. But her ultimate goal was still to return to San Antonio.

As she Googled jobs, she spotted a position for a diversity and inclusion officer for the City of San Antonio. She landed it and began helping the City uphold its non-discrimination ordinance. As San Antonio's first chief equity officer, Bains played a role in a larger movement by local governments serious about advancing equity — one of three in the southern U.S.

Now as the director of community impact for SA2020, she gives back to the community she said gave so much to her. Created in 2010, SA2020 is a nonprofit working with community partners to align people with a community-wide vision for San Antonio.

"I get to meet people who are doing so many different kinds of things to make San Antonio better. It is hugely inspiring, powerful and motivating," she said.

"St. Mary's taught me that we can affect change in our community on different levels. The work that I do in my community, in my city, has a ripple effect across the country and the world." ■

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Photo by Josh Huskin

Partners for change

*University mission meets Marianist
calling to improve neighborhood*





by Alex Z. Salinas (B.A. '11)

For 71 years, Holy Rosary Catholic Church and St. Mary's University have been neighbors on San Antonio's West Side. Literally steps apart, these two Marianist institutions have largely existed in parallel. Now, there are significant efforts to converge their futures — and strengthen the neighborhoods around them in the process.

In 2014, the Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller, M.Sp.S., Archbishop of San Antonio, approached St. Mary's President Thomas Mengler, J.D., with an idea. Holy Rosary Parish had been dealing with an aging population and declining membership. So, García-Siller asked, how about the University and the archdiocese join together to build up Holy Rosary for youths and young adults?

"It was an exciting idea because of our role in the neighborhood of educating young adults, helping them bring their talents and service to their communities," Mengler said.

And like that, the commitment to strengthen the spiritual landscape at St. Mary's and the surrounding neighborhood, the Gateway District — especially for a younger demographic — was under way.

MOUNTING CHALLENGES

The well-documented decline in the number of people in the U.S. who identify as religious, including as Catholic, has taken its toll on many parishes. A 2015 report from the Pew Research Center found that there were about 51 million

Catholic adults in the U.S. at that time, about 3 million fewer than in 2007. The report also stated that 36 percent of millennials between 18 and 24 were religiously unaffiliated, displaying "less connection with Christian churches than older generations."

Despite the statistics, the Marianist Province of the U.S. wasn't deterred. The Province dedicated resources to breathe new life into the partnership, which would also help St. Mary's meet its mission of fostering the formation of people in faith — including its students.

SENDING REINFORCEMENTS

To rededicate efforts in the diverse and burgeoning Southwest, the Marianists appointed Brother Mark Motz, S.M., as the national vocation director in 2017 and sent him to St. Mary's University.

In addition to Motz, the Rev. John Thompson, S.M., came to San Antonio that same year as the pastor at Holy Rosary. More reinforcements arrived: Brother Charles Johnson, S.M.; Brother Esteban Reyes, S.M.; and the Rev. Raymundo González, S.M.

With a new team of Marianists at Holy Rosary, their mission — in addition to daily duties — was to create opportunities for young adults, especially Hispanics, to become more involved with the parish.

▲ The Rev. John Thompson, S.M., looks on as Holy Rosary Catholic Church summer campers play a game of UNO.

◀ Iliana Mallett, senior Management major, joins in the Marianist Heritage Mass in January at Holy Rosary after being honored with a 2019 Marianist Heritage Student Leadership Award.

Teodoro “Alexis” Soto, senior Management major, a St. Mary’s University Summer of Service volunteer, races Holy Rosary summer camper Abigail Garcia.

(From left) Clare Acosta Matos, Director of Civic Engagement at St. Mary’s; Daniel Vasquez, Youth and Young Adult Minister at Holy Rosary; and Ximena Barbagelatta, freshman Marketing major, chat in Holy Rosary after Marianist Heritage Mass.



Or, as Thompson described it, “inspire a new generation.”

“We’re here to form a community of faith that will welcome young adults,” he said. “We have a commitment to this area, being next to St. Mary’s University, to create a pipeline in which young people feel comfortable so that, wherever they go after college, their spiritual lives are fulfilled.”

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

Laura Dicún, a sophomore Management major, didn’t expect the highlight of her first year as a summer camp counselor at Holy Rosary — one facet of the partnership — would involve a couple of shy kids.

“I found that the three of us loved to play tag,” she said. “After that, they wanted to play every day!”

For Dicún, that experience was a bridge connecting her to the children and their families near the University.

The free seven-week summer camp at Holy Rosary, run entirely by St. Mary’s students, launched in summer 2016, with Catholic Charities providing educational, training and support resources. The camp for children ages 7 to 17 living on the West Side has grown every year and alleviates summer child care costs for parents.

“We (St. Mary’s, Catholic Charities and the Holy Rosary Parish Council) found there was a great need for a safe space for children in our community during the summer — a space for kids to continue to grow mentally, physically and spiritually,” said Clare Acosta Matos, Director of Civic Engagement at St. Mary’s.

For three years, Acosta Matos has handpicked St. Mary’s students for a program called Summer of Service, which provides counselors for the camp. This past summer, six St. Mary’s students, including Dicún, planned and led activities from reading to making healthy snacks, and talked to campers about topics such as bullying and how to deescalate it.

Acosta Matos said the counselors got a glimpse of life on the West Side, in turn becoming social justice advocates for those with whom they built relationships.

“Our neighborhood is caught in a cycle of poverty and injustice,” Acosta Matos said. “For St. Mary’s students to be a presence and involved in our worship community has an incredible influence on the families. These relationships don’t end with the child — they encompass parents, grandparents and extended family.”

FRUITS OF THEIR LABOR

Iliana Mallett, a senior Management major and recipient of the 2019 Marianist Heritage Student Leadership Award, served as a camp counselor in 2016 and 2017.

The experience was so life-changing that she, with help from fellow students, founded a Girl Scout troop in the neighborhood.

“I realized something needed to be done for the kids year-round, and I remembered being in Girl Scouts and enjoying it,” Mallett said. “Come to find out, there were no troops near Holy Rosary.”

For the past year, Mallett’s troop of about a dozen girls ages 6 to 12 has met regularly and learned a lot.

“A lot of them didn’t know about the community garden at St. Mary’s or about St. Mary’s in general,” she said. “Some of them had never tried blueberries, so we did a whole lesson on healthy living.

“Our goal is to introduce the girls to new experiences they may not otherwise get.”

LONG-AWAITED ADDITION

For years, Holy Rosary was without a full-time, salaried youth and young adult minister. That changed in 2017, when Daniel Vasquez (B.A. ’12), who had volunteered and worshiped at the church while a St. Mary’s student, filled the void.

“*We have a commitment ... to create a pipeline in which young people feel comfortable so that wherever they go after college their spiritual lives are fulfilled.*”



“

A partnership that includes a charismatic leader like Father Thompson, and us doing our parts, will *advance the Marianist mission* of helping form and develop our students grounded in faith.

”

“To do it well, youth ministry is a full-time job,” Vasquez said, whose long hours are filled with interacting with priests, religious brothers, youths and those from St. Mary’s.

Tasked with developing programming for both youths and young adults ages 18 to 35 in the Gateway District, Vasquez admitted that young adults “are an extremely tough demographic to cater to” because they are often still figuring out their lives and careers.

Vasquez has set two primary goals for now: Establish a strong network with St. Mary’s students and grow the youth faith formation group that meets every Sunday at Holy Rosary. Group attendance averages 35 high schoolers and middle schoolers.

And who is running this group? St. Mary’s students, of course, such as freshman Mathematics major Jeanette Uribe. The Dallas native wanted to continue her faith journey “without Mom or Dad telling me to” after she got to campus.

She heard about Vasquez’s ministry while taking a St. Mary’s Core Curriculum class that required community service. She finished the requirement but continued assisting Vasquez, making deeper connections with neighborhood kids.

“My Catholic faith is very important to me and, because I want to be a middle school math teacher, I’ve found the perfect spot working with Daniel,” Uribe said. “I’m not going to lie, at first, I was scared being thrown in a room with middle schoolers. But after getting to know them, talking to them about sacraments and playing games with them, they started coming not because they had to, but because they wanted to.

“They started confiding in me, and that’s when I knew I was doing something right.”

TEAM EFFORT

In addition to student-volunteer manpower, Holy Rosary benefited from proceeds from the 2017 and 2018 StMU 5K for the Neighborhood totaling \$35,000. Mengler said the money was earmarked to help upgrade their facilities.

“I didn’t envision the 5Ks being so successful, so I give credit to the staff and students who engaged with our community and brought many people together,” he said.

With a “partnership that is evolving,” Mengler cited Civic Engagement and the Marianist Leadership Program as leaders on the University front.

Further partnership examples include Holy Rosary hosting the St. Mary’s Music Department’s Christmas Concert, the Opening School Liturgy Mass in the fall, and the Marianist Heritage Mass in the spring.

ADAPTATION AND CHANGE

“Quite simply, there’s not an owner’s manual for how to make this partnership tick,” said the Rev. Tim Eden, S.M., Ed.D., Rector and Vice President for Mission. “We’ve started from ground zero.”

Father Thompson, who’s been a Marianist priest for 20 years, said the formula to keeping young members captivated is simple: “good music and good preaching.”

“Music moves the heart, and if it works in tandem with the spoken word, it’s all for the better,” Thompson said.

The priest’s open and joyous style is a key to the partnership’s success, Mengler said.

“A partnership that includes a charismatic leader like Father Thompson, and we doing our parts, will advance the Marianist mission of helping form and develop our students grounded in faith,” he said. ■





Characters like me

Alumna fills in cultural gaps with children’s books – and brings Coco from the big screen to young readers

by Anndria Flores (B.A. '12, M.A. '16)

As a child, Diana López (B.A. '90) loved to immerse herself in the world of books. But she noticed early on that the characters in the books didn't look like her or share her last name.

“I remember always feeling like there were two worlds. There was my world, and there was the world of books. I loved both worlds, but they did not overlap,” López said.

Fast forward to college. She came to St. Mary’s University to study English where she flourished and devoured books.

She later became a middle school teacher, fostering a love of reading in a new generation of students. López vividly recalled her students asking, “Where are the stories about us?”

“That question was always spinning in my head,” she said.

Still, López did not think of herself as a writer until she earned a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from then-Southwest Texas State

University in San Marcos and wrote her first book for adults as part of her thesis. After graduating, López started to write another adult book, but found herself frustrated and uninspired. While teaching a Writers in Communities literacy program for middle schoolers, López began thinking it was time for her to write for a new audience — young readers.

“I thought, just for fun, I wonder if I can write a story. I haven’t looked back,” López said. “At this point, I have six middle-grade books, and I know I have more in me.”

López draws inspiration from her world when showcasing her Mexican-American culture in her books. Her second middle-grade book, *Choke*, takes place in the San Antonio junior high where she once taught and mentions familiar San Antonio street names and places.

LIFE-CHANGING COINCIDENCE

López was on the faculty of the University of Houston – Victoria, teaching undergraduate creative writing, when she received an incredible opportunity.

Disney/Pixar was looking for an author to write a young readers book adaptation of the 2018 film *Coco*. López’s name came up thanks to her work presenting Mexican-American culture in children’s books and a coincidental connection with the book’s future editor, who was introduced to López’s work while studying children’s literature in college.

The film *Coco* is the story of a boy who dreams of being a musician and finds himself in the land of the

dead on Día de los Muertos. The book project challenged López to combine what she knew about Mexican-American culture with the changing movie production concepts.

“All these forces started to come together,” said López, who had four months to turn in the

book — incorporating character thoughts and dialogue while trying to pull from concepts, settings and illustrations provided by Disney/Pixar, many of which were in flux. “It was a really good exercise for me.”

When she’s not teaching or writing, López, who lives in Corpus Christi, travels across the U.S. sharing her love for books. Active in the Latinx writers’ community, she also advocates for diverse literature in schools, including books that reflect students’ varied experiences.

“Otherwise, they think that if they’re going to be writers they have to write about other places or settings, and they miss out on what’s right at their fingertips.” ■

“ I thought, just for fun, I wonder if I can write a story. I haven’t looked back. ”

The right place

North Carolina businesswoman credits St. Mary's as factor for success

by Alex Z. Salinas (B.A. '11)

By age 22, Sarah Place (M.B.A. '98) had lived in 13 states — but had yet to truly find her place.

One of those stops was Texas, where her father was stationed at Fort Sam Houston. After graduating from Robert G. Cole High School, Place moved to Massachusetts.

Little did she know she'd one day return to her old stomping grounds to study or that she'd later make her career by opening her own brokerage and online trading firm — Place Trade Financial, Inc.

While in Massachusetts, Place earned a bachelor's degree in Economics and Finance, and worked for international finance firms before her husband, also in the military like her father, was transferred to San Antonio.

Place, who was only a few electives shy of earning a master's degree in Finance before packing her bags, had to weigh her educational options.

"Unfortunately, online education wasn't yet a thing, so being newly married, working full time and not wanting to start from scratch, I thought about St. Mary's," said Place, who had friends enrolled.

"I knew it was a great school."

She enrolled in the MBA program and was immediately impressed by "the much-desired smaller class sizes, the diverse student body and the ability to speak directly with my professors."

Place, already employed at a national brokerage firm while at St. Mary's, soaked up all the knowledge she could.

"Looking back, the professors played an important role in shaping the person and professional I am today," she said. "They instilled in me a quiet confidence."

She said she was stunned when professors twice recommended she get a doctoral degree, adding, "I couldn't believe esteemed educators would think someone like me could be worthy of that."

While Place didn't choose to pursue a doctorate, her eyes were "forced open," and she suddenly imagined herself creating opportunities she hadn't before thought possible.

Three years after graduating from St. Mary's, in 2001, Place founded her own brokerage and online trading firm, Place Trade — incorporated a year later as Place Trade Financial, Inc.

The company, based in Raleigh, North Carolina, has for nearly two decades remained modestly sized. Its previous recognition by *Barron's* magazine, a national publication dedicated to covering the world of finance, landed it in a league with much larger competitors, such as Fidelity, TD Ameritrade and Charles Schwab.

This has sometimes translated into Place logging up to 20-hour work days as president and CEO, though she strives to maintain work-life balance.

"I joke with people that going to the gym is my part-time job," Place said. "Doing some form of exercise helps to fight the stress and other pesky health issues."

She has also been honored by various organizations for her work as a businesswoman and community leader, and dedicates her extra time to publishing a financial self-help book, *From Broke to Badass*, anticipated in 2019. But despite her ongoing busy schedule, Place always tries to make having fun a part of her day.

"I love to see others smile and make them laugh," Place said. "I imagine that somewhere, in a parallel universe, I'm out there rocking the standup comedy circuit." ■

